6. Can we know when to trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge? Consider history and one other area of knowledge.

Emotion is an ambiguity; it is an idea that every human, and questionably animals have. Emotion affects us on how to react to a situation, or to be impartial and be abstained. Trust is also an ambiguity, when do we as people know when to “trust” any situation. Do humans trust something when there is evidence to back-up there believes or do human follow trust by taking into account of their emotions? I can use specific areas of knowledge, such as human sciences, history, and ethics to examine how people react to situation where emotions and trust must be taken into account, to see if it affects the pursuit of knowledge. I need to find an analogy to emotions and trust, and to give examples as evidence, to indefinitely find when to trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge.

To examine this question, that “can we know when to trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge” we have to examine whether emotions can really affect our, “pursuit of knowledge” therefore can emotions hinder it? Or could emotions accelerate the gain of knowledge? Therefore how does emotions affect it. To examine how emotions affect the pursuit of knowledge we have to look at the knowledge issues and ways of knowing involved, such as emotions, reasoning, human sciences, and as well as history.

Emotion by definition is a natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others and/or any of the particular feelings that characterize such a state of mind, such as joy, anger, love, hate, horror, etc.

The question asks “can we know when to trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge?” to find out this question in a more scientific analysis we have to look at the natural science of emotions, how emotions are processed in our brain and compare it to the less scientific analysis, the more abstract ideas of emotions, such as mood, temperament, personality, disposition, and motivation.

Hormones and neurotransmitters such as dopamine, noradrenaline, serotonin, oxytocin and cortisol influence an emotion, from a scientific standpoint. These hormones and neurotransmitters are the driving force of motivation whether it is a positive or negative. Thus motivation affects the other abstract ideas of emotion, such as mood, where if a person has a negative motivation, then they will have a negative mood, and where if they were positively motivated then they would have a positive mood, and of course affects temperament where if a person has a negative or positive motivation, then they will have a negative or positive frame of mind, personality is a clear obvious one, where motivation is what affects a person’s personality, such as if they always have a positive motivation then the person is more likely to have a positive personality. By looking at emotion this way we can see that the scientific aspect of emotion is closely linked to the subconscious aspect of emotion.

To find out when us as people know when to trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge we also have to look at the question, when do we use emotions in certain situations? We can find this out by using sets of questions or scenarios.

An incident, such as the Colorado massacre. Where a psychopathic serial killer walked into a movie theater and massacred anyone in his sight. This obviously gives an emotional response to us, but it does not give the same emotional response to us, compared to the families of the victims, or the same emotional response to the actual victims or even the serial killer. The emotional response is determined by how closely the person is subjected to the situation, where someone close to the incident will have a greater emotional response, where as someone who is not part of the situation will feel a less emotional response. Therefore we as people create a emotional response depending on the situation, this causes people to react differently to situation, and therefore they have a new frame of mind. This affects the pursuit of knowledge, where different decisions are made depending on the emotional state of the person.

Now that we have looked at how people create emotions, depending on the situation, we have to look at the question, does emotions help in acquiring knowledge? To answer this question we can use specific examples in history to see whether or not emotions can indeed help acquire knowledge.

We can look at Josef Mengele as an example. Josef Mengele was a former Nazi medical officer for a concentration camp, specifically for gypsies. Josef Mengele was known for his hatred for the gypsies, he used his emotion of hate to experiment on people at the concentration camp, mostly in the field of genetics, he also conducted experiments on the mental endurance of his patients, giving them fear, while he gains a perverse pleasure from it, showing no sympathy, but had a high ambition of creating the perfect race. This is a dark example, but does show that emotion can be a factor of acquiring knowledge, how emotions give a reason why to do something, how it motivates people to acquire some sort of knowledge.

Emotion can really influence on history by augmenting people’s perceptions on situations. An example of when emotion can have an influence on someone’s perception is the trial of David Irving vs Dr. Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Publishing. Irving was labeled an anti-Semite, which is someone who discriminates against Jews and was considered a blatant racist. David Irving claimed that the holocaust did not happen, as history has recorded the event, Irving suggested that with evidence that the holocaust never happened. An example of evidence David Irving used was a claim that there was no official planning or documentation to exterminate Jews. This evidence that David Irving has given was found false, when evidence of the Wansee Conference were found, during this Wansee Conference high ranking Nazi officers met in order to liquidate/exterminate the Jews. It was brought up during the trial that he sang racist songs to his young daughter and from that it is obvious that he had confirmation biased due to his emotion towards the Jewish race. His racist views caused him to see the information a certain way and even affected his reasoning. There was a prison of consistency in Irving’s claim that the gas chambers were for delousing and not for killing humans. His claim was based upon another Doctor’s research, which was later discredited, yet Irving stuck to the claim. In this case emotion might not be the best thing to trust in History as an area of knowledge as it can affect our perception on things.

Now we have to look whether or not we know when to trust our emotions, when it comes to gaining knowledge, so we have to ask the question, can we trust our emotions when taking into account of knowledge? In science, scientists are taught not to allow their emotions to come between decisions, as this could alter the results of an experiment or could alter the way in which an observation is made. French immunologist Jacques Benveniste's team at the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM) thought of an idea that water could retain memory of what had diluted inside the solution, he did countless experiments which all turned out to be unproven. In some of his experiments he claimed that it had worked but could justify it, but he tried to publish his experiment, he was rejected because of the fact that the editorials found the experiment to be simply wrong, Jacque couldn’t prove the experiment later on when the publishers wanted proof of his experiment. We can see from this example that Jacques Benveniste allowed his emotions to alter his experiment in order to acquire fame, his use of emotion hindered or obscured his pursuit of knowledge.

In politics, politicians make decisions based on their emotional response to the situation; these decisions can also made by the general opinion on the situation.

Both have situations when people should trust and not trust their emotional response, but trust is a very abstract idea, where people will only trust if they think the outcome will be positive. Propaganda is a well-known issue in politics, where the government or ruling party uses propaganda to alter the perspectives of the people, to make people see how they perceive situations. Propaganda is directly effected by the emotions of the leaders, propaganda is used to change the perspectives of the people in order for the mass to join a cause, such as any war situation, the government uses propaganda in order to allude the people into joining the war. Governments allow their emotions to get in the way of the pursuit of knowledge.

In my opinion, the emotions of people should be trusted, and depending on what the situation is, then we should know when to put our emotions into making decisions, we can know when it is appropriate when to use our emotions by knowing if it is ethically right to use our emotions, and whether it is appropriate.

Emotion and trust are both very abstract ideas that people formulate in their conscious and unconscious mind, whether or not we know when to trust our emotions in the pursuit of knowledge should be purely determined by whether the situation would benefit from someone’s emotions making decisions or whether the situation would benefit from an apathetical response.